

Safety Bulletin

A serious incident has taken place



Prohibition Notice - Vegetation blocking designated positions of safety

Issued to: **Network Rail line managers, safety professionals and RISQS registered contractors**

Ref: NRB20-01

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Location: Dover Priory and Charlton Tunnels, Kent, Southern Region

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Overview

On 9th January, ORR Inspectors carried out a joint site visit with Network Rail at Dover Priory to observe the two fixed TOWS (Train Operated Warning System) [Priory Tunnel and Charlton Tunnel] in operation. Following the site visit, the ORR were satisfied with the TOWS system, the provision of places of safety/refuges within the tunnels, the method of operation and staff training/briefing.

However, they found that in the tunnel mouth area and in the cess between the two tunnels there was a limited number of positions of safety due to narrowness of the cess and vegetation growth. Vegetation clearance has since taken place and a further site visit will take place w/c 27 Jan to confirm compliance with the Prohibition Notice.

Discussion Points

IMDMs are to review that vegetation clearance works are undertaken to enable staff have an adequate position of safety, particularly in locations where the cess is narrow IMDMs should prioritise this work when relevant.

For fixed TOWS systems within their areas, IMDMs are to ensure;

- Provision of suitable refuges within any tunnel areas.
- Suitable positions of safety are available in the vicinity of tunnel mouths, bridge spans and throughout the length of each TOWS system

Where there is not a suitable place of safety, all work must be carried out under a line blockage or within a possession until a suitable place of safety is available.

Staff should raise any concerns to their line manager or via close call.